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BROWNBACK, HYDE, DORGAN, ROEMER CALL ON TV EXECUTIVES TO REINSTATE FAMILY HOUR

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS) today was joined by colleagues Chairman Henry Hyde (R-IL), Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Rep. Tim Roemer (D-IN), in sending a letter to top television executives, urging them to reinstate the 'family hour'.

"We are writing to encourage you to use this month's 'sweeps weeks' as a time to reconsider some of your prime-time programming," the letter to top TV executives states.

"As you know, the 'family hour' has grown increasingly less family-friendly. By some studies, this year's prime-time programming contains more violence, profanity and sexual depictions than ever, even during the earliest prime-time hour. Indeed, the Parents Television Council found that within the last two years, references to sex acts during the family hour have increased by 77 percent, depictions of violence doubles, and profanity jumped by 58 percent.

"Of course, you are not legally required to air family-friendly shows during the family hour. It is our hope, however, that you may be willing to consider the implications and consequences of violent and vulgar programming, and reconsider your sponsorship of those shows.

"The evidence linking viewing television violence and anti-social behavior is clear. Studies conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychological Association and the National Institute of Mental Health have all cautioned against the effects of TV violence on young people. We would be happy to supply you with copies of these studies.

"We recognize that parents bear the primary responsibility for monitoring their child's entertainment and television viewing. But television executives must also bear some of the responsibility for the programs they produce and promote. We are not asking you to replace parents, but rather, to help them out -- to make their job a little easier by reducing the amount of violence, sex and language in your television shows. We urge you to reverse course and reinstate the family hour, once again making that time slot suitable for children," the letter said.